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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR 1559 CONSULTATIONS, MAY 8

¶1. (U) This is an action message. USUN may draw from the points in para 2 below during consultations on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1559, currently scheduled for May 8.

¶2. (U) Begin points.

-- We welcome the Secretary General's report and Mr. Larsen's briefing on implementation of UNSC resolution 1559.

-- As we meet here today, Lebanon appears once again on the brink of conflict. The Hizballah-led opposition has confronted Lebanon's legitimate government, using violence and intimidation in an effort to usurp authority from the people and government of Lebanon. On May 6, the Lebanese cabinet declared Hizballah's internal communications network and surveillance of Beirut International Airport illegal and resolved to root out these threats to government authority and internal security. Hizballah and its opposition allies responded with demonstrations, scattered violence, and threats of escalation if the government did not withdraw its decisions.

-- It is clear that Hizballah is constructing a state-within-a-state without regard for the authority of the Lebanese government, the safety and stability of the nation, or the collective wishes of the Lebanese people. Hizballah's leadership also continues to claim that it has rebuilt its arsenal and increased its military capacity since the summer 2006 conflict with Israel. We note this implies serious violations of several resolutions of this Council. We are deeply concerned that, beyond the recently demonstrated willingness to cripple the Lebanese state and economy in pursuit of its narrow political agenda, Hizballah maintains the ability to unilaterally drag Lebanon into another conflict.

-- So long as the Hizballah-led opposition acts in defiance of Lebanon's legitimate government, works to construct a parallel state, and cynically calls for "dialogue" to delay Presidential elections and meetings of the Parliament, it blocks continued progress in implementing the resolutions of this Council and constitutes a continuing threat to peace and security in Lebanon and the region.

-- In this regard, we call upon the Council and the international community to assist the Lebanese government in its efforts to govern on behalf of all Lebanese and to prevent the emergence of a parallel state. Hizballah and its patrons in Syria and Iran must comply fully with all Security Council resolutions and with the decisions of the legitimate Lebanese government.

-- On a related note, I would like to reiterate our concern that it has not yet been possible to hold a presidential election in Lebanon. As I noted just a month ago during consultations on UNSC resolution 1701, the United States continues to hope that Lebanon will elect a president without

preconditions. We support the right of Lebanon's democratic majority to see that the Lebanese Parliament fulfills its constitutional duty in this regard. While a consensus candidate has been agreed upon, we are concerned that the Hizballah-led opposition, with political support from Syria, is using extra-constitutional preconditions to perpetuate the political stalemate at the expense of the Lebanese people.

-- On the matter of Lebanese-Syrian relations, the United States joins the Secretary-General in regretting the complete lack of progress in establishing a relationship between these two states that recognizes Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and right to freedom from foreign interference. We again urge the Syrian government to respond to the requests of the Lebanese government to undertake serious talks aimed at delineating their common border. Syria reports that such talks are ongoing, but in fact none of the meetings of the bilateral commission have focused on the issues of delineation and demarcation.

-- Further, Syria continues to refuse to establish diplomatic relations with Lebanon so long as there is what it characterizes as a "hostile" government in Beirut. We find Syrian fears of a "hostile" neighbor difficult to understand given that weapons continue to flow from Syria into Lebanon and that Syria's allies in Lebanon are working to undermine the legitimate government of Lebanon. We again call upon the Syrian government to immediately normalize its relations with Lebanon and establish an embassy in Beirut.

-- Progress on these outstanding provisions of UNSCR 1559 is long overdue. It is telling that Syria is unwilling to make even these most basic acknowledgments of Lebanon's sovereignty.

-- On the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, I note that with the exception of the northern part of Ghajar, Israel has fully withdrawn from Lebanese territory, and the LAF has deployed throughout the country for the first time in nearly 40 years. We applaud this historic deployment and encourage all sides to accelerate trilateral efforts to find an early resolution to the issue of Ghajjar.

-- On militia disarmament, this report details disturbing information about mounting reports that militias are expanding their existing weapons arsenals or are reacquiring an armed capacity. The report also notes the Secretary General's deep concern about the activities of the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada along the Lebanese-Syrian border. In this context, we note that the Lebanese opposition has called for renewed National Dialogue. We would hope to see the conclusions of the 2006 National Dialogue, including the commitment to disarm Palestinian militias outside refugee camps, implemented first.

-- Finally, I applaud the efforts of Lebanese security services, especially the Lebanese Armed Forces under the leadership of General Michel Sleiman, to implement UNSCRs 1559 and 1701 while working to contain threats from armed groups in Lebanon and maintain law and order throughout the country during this time of great political tension.

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